



City of Santa Barbara

VACATION RENTALS

Please be advised that the following information is subject to change.

The conversion of an existing residence to a vacation rental is considered by the Planning Division to be a change-of-use from a *residential use* to a *non-residential use* and will require compliance with the following standards described below. A “vacation rental” is a hotel when any building, group of buildings, or portion of a building is occupied for overnight stay by individuals for less than 30 consecutive days (See the definition of “hotel” at [SBMC§28.04.395](#)).

Please refer to the table below **and** general standards on page 2 for relevant requirements. A project **must comply with all general standards** in addition to the project components to qualify the level of review outlined below. Please refer to the Planning Division handouts at www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/PlanningHandouts for submittal requirements. Additional information may be found on the [Vacation Rental](#) webpage.

Planner Consultations or a Pre-Application Review Team (PRT) submittal are highly recommended for projects subject to Staff Hearing Officer or Planning Commission review.

Planning Process for Conversion of Residential Unit to a Vacation Rental		
Number of Existing Residential Units to be Converted	Project Components to Determine Level of Review	Decision-Maker
1 Residential Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No exterior changesConverting less than 1,000 s.f.* to the non-residential use (excluding garages and carports)	Staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Exterior changes proposed or Converting between 1,000 - 3,000 s.f.* to a non-residential use (excluding garages and carports)	Design Review (Only)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Project located in the Coastal Zone and Converting less than 3,000 s.f.* to the non-residential use (excluding garages and carports)Modification required (If no other approval is required by the Planning Commission)	Staff Hearing Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Converting more than 3,000 s.f.* to the non-residential use (excluding garages and carports)	Planning Commission
> 1 Residential Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hotel Conversion Permit required	Planning Commission

*Please refer to the Nonresidential Growth Management Program Ordinance [SBMC§28.85](#) for more information on limitations.

The following are General Standards that apply to all vacation rental applications.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **ALLOWED ZONES.** Vacation rentals are allowed in all zones in which hotels are allowed: R-4, C-L, C-P, C-1, C-2, C-M, HRC-1, HRC-2, HRC-2/OC and M-1 Zones. If the property is not located in one of these zones, a vacation rental is not an allowed use in that zone and cannot be permitted.
2. **BUSINESS LICENSE.** The City of Santa Barbara requires that every person, firm, corporation, partnership or other business organization conducting business within the City obtain a business license. Vacation rental operators must have a business license and pay transient occupancy taxes (TOT). For additional information see <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/business/license/tot/>
3. **GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN MINOR AND SMALL ADDITIONS.** All legal lots that existed as of December 6, 1989 can be allocated up to 1,000 square feet from the Minor Addition category. Only legal lots that are located within the Downtown Development Area can apply for square footage from the Small Addition category for 1,000 up to 3,000 square feet.
4. **PARKING.** The parking requirement for a vacation rental is the same as that for hotels: one parking space per sleeping unit ([SBMC§28.90.100.J.10](#)). In the case of vacation rentals, a bedroom is considered a sleeping unit.
5. **SETBACKS.** Buildings must comply with the required setbacks. Non-conforming buildings require approval of zoning modification(s) for a change-of-use in the setbacks.
6. **TENANT DISPLACEMENT ASSISTANCE ORDINANCE (SBMC§28.89).** Proposals that are limited to the conversion of only one existing residential unit shall comply with the provisions in the Tenant Displacement Assistance Ordinance (TDAO). A sixty (60) day Notice of Intent must be provided prior to filing any application and certification of displacement assistance to all eligible resident households must be provided prior to the issuance of a permit.

Projects that involve more than one unit are subject to the Hotel Conversion Ordinance and must comply with the Tenant Protection Provisions outlined in [SBMC§28.88](#).
7. **OTHER DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW.** The conversion of existing residential units to a vacation rental may require additional upgrades, permits, or review from the City Building and Safety Division, the Fire Department, or Public Works Department. Review all proposals with the Building and Safety Division and Fire Department for any code related questions.
8. **ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS.** Be advised that additional limitations may apply related to project location and development history. Please review all records, documents, agreements, associated with your existing site.

DISCRETIONARY REVIEW INFORMATION

1. **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA).** CEQA may apply to your project. Projects subject to design review, Staff Hearing Officer or Planning Commission review are discretionary projects subject to CEQA.
2. **COASTAL ZONE.** Any project located in the Coastal Zone (SD-3 Zone) requires a [Coastal Development Permit](#) and subject to those submittal requirements.
3. **DESIGN REVIEW.** Design review approval by either the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) or the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) is required for any exterior alterations to existing or proposed non-residential buildings. *Examples include new parking spaces, changes to doors and windows, landscape, building colors, etc.*

4. **DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL.** The conversion of residential units to vacation rentals requires the allocation of non-residential square footage as described in [SBMC §28.85](#). The cumulative allocation of more than 1,000 square feet requires Development Plan Approval as outlined in [SBMC §28.85](#). Please refer to the [Nonresidential Growth Management Program \(GMP\) – Common Questions](#) handout for additional guidance with the applicability of the Nonresidential Growth Management Program (GMP). Be advised that additional limitations may apply related to project location and development history.
5. **HOTEL CONVERSION PERMIT.** All projects proposing to convert two or more units are subject to compliance with the [Hotel Conversion Ordinance SBMC §28.88](#) and require the issuance of a Hotel Conversion Permit. Please refer to the ordinance for additional standards, application, and submittal requirements.
6. **MAILED NOTICING REQUIREMENTS.** Ministerial permits do not require mailed noticing to neighbors. A 10-day notice will be provided to neighbors if required under [SBMC§22.68.040.A](#) or [SBMC§22.22.132.A](#) for projects subject to design review. A 10-day notice will be provided to the neighbors for all projects subject to review by the Staff Hearing Officer or Planning Commission review and approval.
7. **STAFF HEARING OFFICER OR PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVALS.** Refer to the [Development Application Review Team \(DART\) Informational and Submittal Packets](#) for information on the process and submittal requirements. Refer to the [Modification and Performance Standard Permit Submittal Process](#) handout for projects which only require a zoning modification. Once a complete application is submitted, the project will be placed on agenda to be reviewed by either the Planning Commission or Staff Hearing Officer. *Note: If the project consists of a zoning modification only, a pre-consultation is required prior to submittal.*
8. **STORM WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (SWMP).** Discretionary projects must comply with Storm Water Management Program requirements, if applicable.